

Legislative Update

Senate Immigration Bill

A group of senators recently announced a comprehensive immigration reform [proposal](#) . Hundreds of Northern Californians have contacted me to express their grave concerns with the measure, and I share their concerns. Many recall legislation passed in 1986 that promised tough border security and allowed several million illegal immigrants to become citizens--without facing tough penalties. Twenty years later, our borders are far from secure, and there are an additional 12 million illegal immigrants in our nation. We must avoid repeating the failed 1986 approach.

The number one priority of any immigration bill must be to make our nation's borders fully secure. Unfortunately, the Senate proposal would require only half of the border fence authorized in last year's Secure Fence Act to be constructed before the rest of the bill goes into effect. Among other concerns, the bill also does not address the problem of "anchor babies," or children born to illegal immigrants. Some 3 million illegal immigrants have children who were born in the United States and are therefore U.S. citizens. We are the only major nation in the world that grants birthright citizenship. Failure to reform this policy virtually guarantees that we will face these problems again in the future.

It is important to note that the proposed bill is in the early stages of the legislative process. In fact, the legislation has encountered major opposition and is no longer being considered by the Senate. However, the issue could receive consideration in Congress in the near future. I will not support any comprehensive immigration reform legislation unless I am fully satisfied that it truly secures our borders, respects the rule of law, and prevents future illegal immigration. At the same time, it is essential that we enact a workable temporary worker program for agriculture. [Share your thoughts](#)

Troop Funding Measure

Congress has passed legislation, [H.R. 2206](#) , with my support, that will fund our nation's missions in Iraq and Afghanistan--without establishing an arbitrary timetable for the withdrawal

of U.S. troops. At the same time, it makes it clear that the Iraqi government must work more effectively to reconcile the Iraqi people. The President recently signed this critical troop funding bill into law. [Read more](#)

Meanwhile, the final brigade of the U.S. troop surge recently arrived in Iraq. In the coming weeks and months, our troops and their Iraqi counterparts will continue to implement the new security plan. Our commanders on the ground have already reported some positive news. The deadly cycle of sectarian killings has slowed, and Iraqis are increasingly fighting al Qaeda terrorists. In response, al Qaeda continues to unleash horrific attacks in hopes of turning Iraqis against one another. According to the Department of Defense, there are signs that al Qaeda's plan might be backfiring. [Read more](#)

Like all Americans, I deeply mourn the loss of every fallen soldier and want our troops home soon. I strongly believe that the best way to honor their sacrifices is to ensure that al Qaeda and other extremists do not establish a terrorist sanctuary in Iraq. I find solace knowing that the men and women of our armed forces are protecting their fellow Americans by fighting terrorists abroad. And I continue to believe that a stable, democratic Iraq would bolster our national security by being an important ally in the war against radical jihadists.

Ill-advised Federal Budget

The House and Senate agreed upon and passed a final budget blueprint for the next five years. Unfortunately, the measure, [S Con. Res. 21](#), calls for a tax increase of at least \$217 billion. Under the budget's provisions, we could even see the marriage penalty return and the child tax credit be lowered from \$1,000 to \$500. If this occurred, the American people would face the largest tax increase in our nation's history. Meanwhile, the budget does not address the out-of-control growth in entitlement spending, one of our nation's pressing challenges. It is irresponsible to place this massive burden on the shoulders of future generations.

Pro growth tax policies enacted since 2001 have played a major role in strengthening our economy and creating millions of new jobs. Our vibrant economy has generated a tremendous boom in tax revenue--revenues are up 32 percent--helping to significantly reduce the federal deficit. Raising taxes and disregarding unsustainable government spending would be harmful to our nation's economy. Congress should not take this course. [Share your thoughts](#)

Defense Bill

I recently voted in favor of [H.R. 1585](#) , a defense bill that would bolster our military and provide critical resources for our men and women in uniform. The bill would authorize funding for protective equipment, advanced weapons, a 3.5% pay raise for all military personnel, an increase in the size of the Army and Marine Corps, and ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The bill was not perfect, primarily because it would reduce funding for missile defense. But, in total, it will help equip the men and women of our armed forces with the tools they need to defend our freedom and keep us secure. [Read more](#) .

Secure Rural Schools Funding

The wartime supplemental spending bill also includes funding for the Secure Rural Schools program. The bill provides a one year extension of the program, and counties with National Forest land in our congressional district will receive about \$25 million collectively. I am disappointed that Congress passed only a one-year extension (rather than five years). But securing this funding was a significant accomplishment, considering the tough budget climate and the difficulty rural members have had in obtaining majority support for the program.

Many counties in our area rely heavily on this program to fund vital local services, such as education, road safety, and emergency services. Traditionally, 25 percent of the revenues generated by forest management projects on federal lands helped fund these local programs. This revenue sharing program provided a total of \$25 million to our area each year. But environmental regulations and lawsuits have greatly reduced forest management projects, and by extension, the crucial local schools and roads funding they provided. The Secure Rural Schools program ensures that the federal government keeps its longstanding promise to share revenue with rural counties, despite the decline in timber revenue.

Although the funding from H.R. 2206 will meet a critical short-term need, counties in our area will need a longer-term extension of the Secure Rural Schools program. I'm a lead cosponsor of

[H.R. 17](#) , which would extend it through 2014, but passing this legislation will continue to be an uphill battle. I believe we must also keep in mind that the long-term solution to supporting rural counties and schools requires changing federal policies to restore active forest management to a sufficient level. Currently, the majority of National Forest land in our area is badly overgrown, leaving nearby communities and watersheds at risk of catastrophic fire. Additional forest thinning would not only provide critical revenue for Northern California, but it would also help protect communities from forest fires, improve forest health, and stabilize local economies.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Pending Legislation and Issues Important to Northern CA

Rising Gas Prices

Northern Californians are again encountering very high prices at the pump. In fact, our area suffers from some of the highest gasoline and diesel prices in the entire nation. Many factors cause fuel prices to spike. Most recently, unexpected maintenance problems at some oil refineries have temporarily reduced the supply of gasoline. Meanwhile, the demand for gasoline has been steadily increasing as the summer driving season has gotten underway. This imbalance between supply and demand has been pushing prices higher.

Rising oil prices are also contributing to the high cost of gasoline and diesel fuel. Oil is a globally traded commodity and recent price increases are the direct result of extremely tight world market conditions. New oil supplies have been slow to come online even as demand for oil continues to increase. OPEC - the international oil cartel - has cut oil production to keep prices high, and significant oil reserves in non-OPEC countries, such as those in the United States, have been locked away. [Read testimony before Congress from the Energy Information Administration](#)

When America experienced its first energy crisis in the 1970s, we imported roughly 30 percent of our oil from foreign nations. Today, that number is twice as high. Putting our energy security in the hands of volatile regimes around the world is simply irresponsible from an economic and security standpoint. I have repeatedly supported legislation that would allow us to produce more

energy here at home ([H.R. 5429](#) and [H.R. 6](#)). We have huge reserves in Alaska and off our coasts. Importantly, 21st Century technology would allow us to expand our energy production in an environmentally-safe manner. I have also supported efforts (

[H.R. 3893](#)

) to cut bureaucratic "red tape" and make it easier to build or expand oil refineries. Unfortunately, many efforts like these have been blocked or scaled back in Congress. Be assured I will continue to advocate for commonsense legislation that will make energy more affordable for Northern Californian families, farms, and small businesses, and will reduce our reliance on foreign oil.

Iran's Continuing Defiance

In recent months, the U.S. military has indicated that Iranian agents are assisting terrorists in Iraq. Meanwhile, Iran's radical president recently repeated his hope that Israel would be destroyed in the "near future." This chilling statement came just days after the International Atomic Energy Agency reported on May 23 that Iran is continuing to enrich uranium--in defiance of three United Nations resolutions calling for Iran to stop these activities. The IAEA concluded that Iran could develop nuclear weapons in as few as three years.

I am deeply concerned by Iran's development of nuclear technology. Their nuclear program clearly threatens our national security and our allies in the Middle East. I believe the international community must stand united in addressing Iran's blatant defiance. The United Nations, in particular, must take effective steps to prevent the hostile Iranian regime from acquiring nuclear weapons. It is my deepest hope that diplomatic and economic pressure persuades Iran to terminate their nuclear program promptly. But, because of the very serious threat this poses to our national security, all options must remain on the table. [Share your thoughts](#)

China and Darfur Genocide

I joined several other representatives in [urging the President of China](#) to pressure the Sudanese government to stop the horrific atrocity occurring in Darfur. I'm pleased that China

took an initial step of appointing a special envoy to Darfur the same day its Embassy received our letter. This was a positive step, but China can and must do more. The Sudanese government benefits greatly from their close economic relationship with China. China should follow the United States by restricting non-humanitarian trade until and unless the Sudanese government takes effective steps to stop the Darfur genocide. I will continue to work to increase the international pressure on the Sudanese government to end this terrible tragedy.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Trade Policy Agreement

In January, I was selected to serve as the "ranking member" of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade. This new position allows me to have more of a leadership role on an issue that is critically important to our Northern California economy. In our agriculture-rich area, we depend on international markets to reach the 95 percent of consumers living outside the U.S. As the ranking member, I am able to advocate for bringing down foreign tariffs and other barriers that are harmful to domestic agriculture. Trade increases our access to markets abroad. It also benefits American consumers by providing more choices at lower prices. As a result, I strongly believe free and fair trade is essential to our nation.

On May 10, I joined other congressional leaders and the Administration in announcing a bipartisan agreement that reaffirms our nation's commitment to free trade. It provides a way forward on market-opening agreements that are currently awaiting consideration in Congress. In doing so, it will help us keep our competitive edge over other nations, such as China and the European Union, that are pursuing expanded trade themselves. It will also provide Northern Californian businesses and consumers with more opportunities to experience the benefits of international trade. [Share your thoughts](#)

Veterans Health Care Bill

I have cosponsored the HEALTHY Vets Act, [H.R. 315](#), which would make it easier for veterans in remote rural areas to receive care in their local communities, instead of having to travel long distances to a VA facility. Although the VA system is designed to provide health care

through VA facilities, it's simply not realistic to expect veterans in rural areas, like parts of Northern California, to drive over 100 miles to the nearest VA clinic. Under H.R. 315, the VA would be directed to contract with community providers to deliver health care to these veterans.

Agriculture Tax Relief

I became the lead cosponsor of [H.R. 2280](#) to provide tax relief to farmers through accelerating the cost recovery on large agricultural machinery. Specifically, the legislation reduces from seven to five years the depreciation schedule for such equipment, allowing farmers to write-off more of this essential investment in equipment faster. The American Farm Bureau Federation is strongly [supporting this bipartisan bill](#) .

District News

Honoring Those Who Served



During the Memorial Day weekend, I had the opportunity to pay tribute to the brave men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep our nation free and secure. It is always humbling to pause and remember those who have fallen in the line of duty. Since the beginning of our nation, hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives while defending the American people from the likes of fascism and communism.

Today, our soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors are defending our nation from radical jihadists. I, like every American, am very grateful to these men and women, and my thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq fighting to keep us safe and secure. [Read Speech](#)

Herger, Assistant Secretary Woodley Tour Critical Northern California Levees



Protecting people from flooding is a critical issue for many communities in our area. As recently as 1986 and 1997, catastrophic flooding devastated towns and farm land in Northern California. Many of you may have seen the devastating consequences caused by these events firsthand. These flood events took the lives of four Northstate residents and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in property and infrastructure damages. I believe protecting at-risk communities must be one of our nation's top priorities.

I recently invited Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Woodley to our area to discuss the flood protection needs of Northern California. Assistant Secretary Woodley is responsible for the Civil Works Program of the Army Corps of Engineers, which includes the design, construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of the nation's levee and flood protection systems. I asked the Assistant Secretary to join me and local flood protection officials on a tour of ongoing levee improvement projects in Yuba, Sutter, and Glenn Counties in order to show him examples of areas in our district that are especially vulnerable to flooding.



During our tour, we visited the newly constructed [Bear River levee setback](#) in Yuba County, an integral component of the larger Yuba River Basin project. In addition, we visited with Sutter County officials to learn about their priorities, and to show Assistant Secretary Woodley the location of levee failures during the historic floods of 1955 and 1997. We also toured the [Hamilton City J Levee project](#) in Glenn County, which is designed to provide a higher level of flood protection for local residents and nearby agriculture land. The tours provided Assistant Secretary Woodley with a firsthand look at the need for enhanced flood protection in our area. I will continue to work with him and other flood control leaders to improve flood protection for North State communities.

Chico Student Wins Congressional Art Competition

